disclosure of a camera that executes a smooth focus follow-up operation as providing the missing teaching.

However, Ito et al. appear to teach a system in which a single camera automatically tracks a moving object along an expected route (see paragraph 0029: "An application of this invention may involve having the camera apparatus 1 capture images of an important person whose passage is expected along a walking route ranging from a point A to a point B."). The camera apparatus 1 of Ito et al. is provided with information specifying focus, zoom and iris settings for specific points along the expected path, for example points A and B as discussed in paragraph 0029 and illustrated in Figure 2. This stored information is then used to capture images at a later time (see paragraph 0029: "As the time of subsequent image pickup, the user simply issues a follow-up instruction to get images of the person taken automatically through smooth focusing."). In order to capture images in an optimal manner, the system of Ito et al. calculates appropriate camera settings for points along the path from A to B (see paragraph 0033: "On the basis of the settings held in the memory 15, the camera apparatus 1 calculates continuously the focusing, zoom and iris values at the current camera angle θ so as to vary the ongoing camera settings . . . . ").

Thus, it appears that Ito et al. teach a system in which various settings of a single camera, namely focusing, zoom and iris values, are given values corresponding to two or more points along a path, and that these settings are continuously re-calculated for intermediate points between each pair of points for which the values are initially given. In other words, Ito et al. disclose a system for automatically controlling various camera settings such that images of objects moving along a path can be captured in an optimal manner. Ito et al. therefore provide for interpolation of the various camera settings.

In contrast, the present invention provides for production, by image processing (i.e., use of a processor) of "a smooth transitional view ***between*** at least two" of a plurality of cameras, thus providing a continuous change of camera angle between the cameras. That is, transitions between the images themselves, rather than mechanical settings of the cameras capturing the images, are interpolated in order to provide a smooth "hand-off" between images captured by different cameras. Such a system is nowhere disclosed, described or contemplated by Ito et al. Thus, the combined teachings of the cited references could not have yielded systems as claimed in present claims 1 and 3.

With respect to claims 2 and 4, similar reasoning applies. Use of the camera of Ito et al., with its pre-set camera settings at two or more points along a pre-determined path, with Hendricks

et al., would not have led one of ordinary skill to the methods of claims 2 and 4. At most, such a combination would have yielded methods in which multiple cameras, each requiring selection of specific points along pre-determined paths, are employed to smoothly capture images along such pre-determined paths, without any provision for generation of smooth transitional views *between* any two of such cameras. Indeed, nothing in Ito et al. suggests that such a smooth transition between any two cameras could even be provided; one would have to anticipate, and then provide specific camera settings for, an arbitrarily large number of potential viewing paths between all potential pairs of cameras in order to provide any transitions at all between such cameras, let alone *smooth* transitions between cameras. Again, applicant emphasizes that Ito et al. do not appear to suggest providing for transitions between two cameras, being concerned solely with capturing images using *one* camera.

Accordingly, the cited references do not appear to suggest to one of ordinary skill the subject matter of any of the present claims. The cited art must therefore fail as §103 teachings. Withdrawal of the rejection on this basis is respectfully urged.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is submitted that all present claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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